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INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN ARCHAEOLOGY
UISPP2023 BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

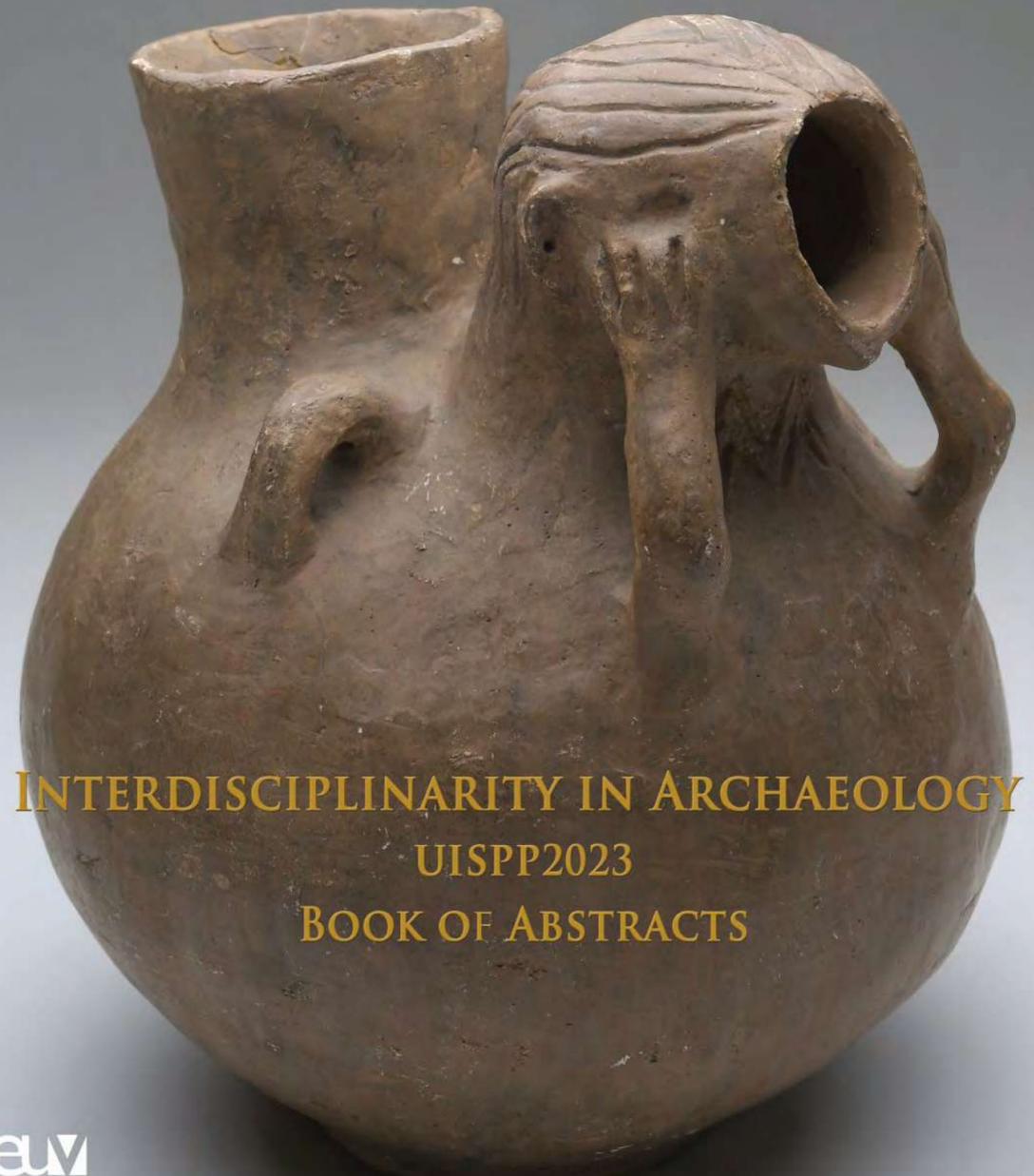
ANDREI STAVILĂ, CRAIOVAN BOGDAN, ROXANA CÎRȚ
COORDONATORI



Editura Universității de Vest din Timișoara

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Welcome to UISPP World Congress 2023

Timișoara, Romania

Marilen Gabriel PIRTEA

Rector of West University of Timișoara

It is a great honour for us, at the West University of Timișoara, to organize the anniversary XX UISPP World Congress in Timișoara. After a long period of time in which the state of the pandemic has affected all the major scientific events, we look with confidence to returning to live presentations and joyful debates on the hottest topics in Pre- and Proto-historical archaeology, and also on the cutting-edge approaches leading to the ever-new achievements in the science of archaeology.

West University of Timișoara (WUT) is the main higher education institution and research hub in Western Romania. Here, we encourage inspiring and competent research, education, and artistic creation with due regard to academic rigour as we scrutinize the future through how we bring together advanced knowledge from various disciplines taking a great focus on trans- and interdisciplinary research. This is why we fully resonate with the general theme of this edition of the UISPP congress which is **Interdisciplinarity in Archaeology**. Beyond the prospect of a permanent renewal and necessary synchronization with the global scientific landscape, the interdisciplinary vision in archaeology brings new hopes for the conservation of **endangered archaeological heritage** through the latest technologies in the field of digitization.

Once again, the great disasters that are destroying communities and human lives are returning where none of us thought it would be possible. Beyond human suffering, what we see more often are the incredible series of destructions of archaeological sites and archaeological heritage in museums and collections. It is the duty not only of the body of archaeologists, but of the entire scientific community to always find new solutions to ensure the preservation in the best conditions of the universal archaeological heritage and its transmission to future generations. Here at West University of Timișoara, we will be permanently involved in the generous purposes of this mission.

The scientific debates are to be continued far beyond the spaces that our university offers for the works of the congress, in the enchanting setting of Timișoara, one of the most beautiful cities in Eastern Europe, acting as a bridge between east and west, a model of historical harmony and modern development in a cultural multi-ethnic environment.

Welcome to Timișoara!

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FOREWORD

Dan Ștefan

The National Museum of Eastern Carpathians

In the long journey of humankind, archaeology stands as a bridge between the past and the present, unearthing the remnants of long-forgotten civilizations and piecing together the puzzle of our shared human heritage. Over the years, the field of archaeology has not only evolved but has also woven itself into the intricate fabric of various disciplines, giving birth to the fascinating realm of interdisciplinarity.

From its very inception, archaeology displayed a natural affinity for the insights offered by other fields. Early archaeologists intuitively borrowed methods from diverse disciplines to unravel the mysteries of the past. Inspired from geology, they harnessed the power of stratigraphy, carefully deciphering the layers of Earth to reconstruct ancient timelines. Engineering contributed the meticulous art of archaeological drawing, based on horizontal and vertical sections, enabling the transformation of buried remnants into precise visual narratives. These pioneers adopted various survey methods, a gift from the engineering domain and cartography, to navigate landscapes teeming with historical secrets. Meanwhile, early statistical insights breathed life into archaeology's core. Typology, inspired by biological classification, became a dynamic system for categorizing artifacts based on shared traits. This, paired with foundational principles of quantitative analysis, illuminated patterns and narratives hidden within the archaeological record, forming the bedrock of traditional archaeology. This collaboration marked the dawn of interdisciplinarity in archaeology, setting the stage for a journey that would see the discipline enriched by an ever-expanding array of methodologies.

The emergence of processual archaeology marked a watershed moment in archaeological practice. A profusion of novel methodologies, grounded in physical and chemical analyses, remote sensing techniques that paved the way for Landscape Archaeology, geophysics, and advanced statistical tools, reshaped the landscape of archaeological investigation. As archaeologists embraced these new methods, they unlocked unprecedented insights into the lives, cultures, and landscapes of antiquity.

Anthropology, sociology and basic philosophy, with their profound insights into human behaviour and societal dynamics, subsequently found their place within the archaeological narrative. The contextual interpretation of archaeological records acquired a new dimension, as archaeologists began to appreciate the intricate relationship between material remains and the sociocultural milieus in which they were embedded. This fusion of disciplines brought human stories to life, turning ancient artifacts into vessels of narrative.

As we stand on the precipice of a new era, the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has thrust archaeology into uncharted territory. Archaeologists now find themselves at the vanguard of a technological revolution, experimenting with Language Model models (LLMs) and AI-driven algorithms. These digital tools hold the potential to revolutionize data analysis, enabling us to parse through vast volumes of information with unprecedented speed and precision. The marriage of archaeology and AI exemplifies the pinnacle of interdisciplinarity, where the analytical prowess of AI meets the nuanced understanding of human history.

The role of interdisciplinary approaches in archaeology has long been a subject of discussion, with each decade marking a resurgence of this debate. While interdisciplinarity brings undeniable benefits, it has, at times, resulted in a dispersion of focus and a divergence of research directions. Therefore, it is only natural to occasionally pause and question, especially as archaeology solidifies itself as an independent scientific field, whether interdisciplinarity remains essential. In a context where archaeology is increasingly asserting its autonomy within an academic landscape characterized by the growth of all disciplines, the answer remains resoundingly affirmative. Yet, it is the archaeologist

who ultimately shoulders the responsibility of selecting the most effective interdisciplinary tools and techniques. This responsibility is crucial in piecing together the intricate fabric of past human societies.

This is way we devoted the UISPP XX World Congress to "**Interdisciplinarity in Archaeology**". Here in Timișoara we embark on a journey through time and knowledge, tracing the evolution of archaeological methodology from its humble beginnings to its contemporary frontiers. We delve into the symbiotic relationship between archaeology and its interdisciplinary partners, acknowledging the profound contributions of each field to the collective pursuit of understanding our past. Just as a mosaic is composed of diverse fragments, so too is the realm of archaeology enriched by the collaborative efforts of archaeologists along physicists, chemists, geologists, statisticians, anthropologists, IT specialists, and more.

Defining itself as a unique scientific pursuit, archaeology is tasked with carving its own trajectory while harmonizing with the tapestry of knowledge woven by various disciplines. The intertwining threads of interdisciplinarity enhance our ability to decipher the narratives etched into ancient artifacts and landscapes. As the chapters of this volume, echoing the sessions of the Congress, unfold, we invite you to explore the captivating interplay between archaeology and its interdisciplinary companions. Each facet contributes to the ever-evolving saga of the pre and protohistory of humankind.

The Iron Gates Gorge: a corridor or barrier in the spread of modern humans from Lower to Middle Danube

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Recent research into the transition from the Middle to the Upper Paleolithic in the Lower Danube has shown that there is a concentration of sites from the early phase of the settlement of modern humans in the area. The Initial Upper Paleolithic was confirmed at sites in northern Bulgaria, while several (Proto) Aurignacian sites were recently identified in northeastern Serbia - at the exit from Iron Gates Gorge. All these layers pre-date the CI eruption (42-40 ka cal BP). In contrast, all of the sites located on the other side of the Iron Gates and the Carpathian-Balkan mountain range in eastern Serbia are dated to the period after the eruption. The geographical distribution and chronology of the Aurignacian sites supports the hypothesis that the Danube was an important corridor at this time, especially since the sites that could be linked to the IUP and proto-Aurignacian have not yet been recorded deeper in the interior of the Balkans. This suggests the possibility that in the period before, and especially after the eruption, there was aggregation and social and cultural integration of the Aurignacian groups in the southwestern Carpathian Mountains. The richness and variability of Aurignacian industries in Banat, as well as the appearance of cave art in Coliboaia and (perhaps) Selačka Pećina 3, may indirectly attest to this.

Key words: The Iron Gates Gorge; Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition; Balkans; Aurignacian.

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Table of Contents

Welcome to UISPP World Congress 2023 Timișoara, Romania	i
Scientific Committee	ii
Honorary Committee	iii
Organising Committee	iv
Foreword	v
Public Lectures – Keynote Speakers	2
Scientific Sessions	7
<i>Session 15-2: Re-Examining Mortuary Practices and Human Sacrifice through Interdisciplinary Advances</i>	7
<i>Session 2-1: Interdisciplinary studies on earthen architecture</i>	15
<i>Session 11-1: Continuity, variations, and replacement? Lithic techno-functional traditions and population movements during the Final Palaeolithic in Northern Eurasia</i>	23
<i>Session 21-3: The archaeometry of rock art</i>	31
<i>Session 20-2: Exploring the relevance of mountain occupation in prehistoric and protohistoric times: a worldwide perspective with a focus on the Carpathians</i>	39
<i>Session 8-6: Discontinuity, Recycling and Unclassified pieces within knapping processes during the Lower and Middle Paleolithic</i>	49
<i>Session 10-3: Upper Paleolithic portable art in Europe</i>	57
<i>Session 9-1: Middle Paleolithic bifaces from the Caucasus to the Rhine</i>	65
<i>Session 13-3: Crafts and Craftsmanship in the Metal Ages</i>	73
<i>General Session 7: Archaeological Theory and Practice</i>	83
<i>Session 4-1: What’s new in (Paleo)anthropology? - Methodology, concepts and discoveries</i>	103
<i>Session 5-1: Understanding connections between mines and other archaeological contexts</i>	121
<i>Session 10-1: Archaeology in Banat</i>	137
<i>Session 6-2: Traceology and its interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of wear traces and residues for understanding the evolution of human capacities</i>	147
<i>Session 8-1: Lower Palaeolithic all around the world: only Oldowan and Acheulean?</i>	171
<i>Session 24-1: The Critical and Evolving Role of Preventive Archaeology in Creating Cultural Heritage Knowledge</i>	195
<i>Session 13-2: Interdisciplinarity in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeometallurgy</i>	203
<i>Session 8-2: Lithic-based approaches to understand site formation processes, economy, and techno-logical behaviours during Palaeolithic</i>	211
<i>Session 10-2: Current research on the Upper Palaeolithic of Eurasia</i>	223
<i>Session 12-1: Chalcolithisation</i>	239
<i>Session 15-1: Mortuary Practices and Human Sacrifice in Prehistory and Protohistory in Eurasia</i>	247
<i>General Session 1: Lower and Middle Paleolithic/General Session 2: Upper Paleolithic</i>	261

<i>Session 12-2: Dynamics of Neolithisation in the Banat and Neighboring Areas</i>	277
<i>Session 8-7: Characterizing changing technology, subsistence and settlement dynamics of the Middle Stone Age and Middle Paleolithic</i>	287
<i>General Session 5: Metal Ages</i>	305
<i>Session 1-1: Untold stories. "Marginal" scholars and/or intellectual movements in the history of archaeology</i>	327
<i>Session 1-2: History of the History of Archaeology: between Archaeologists' and Historians' Concerns. Figures, Trends, and Perspectives</i>	337
<i>Session 18: Prehistoric art studies in North Africa and Sahara at the beginning of the 21st Century. Contributions from Interdisciplinary Research Approaches</i>	345
<i>Session 21-2: Pendant or not a pendant? Identification, uses and meanings</i>	361
<i>Session 21-4: Interdisciplinarity in the study of rock art: the use of new technologies to understand the artistic dynamics of past societies</i>	381
<i>Session 21-1: Archaeoacoustics: a novel interdisciplinary way of studying the past</i>	393
<i>Session 23-1: Prehistory and society: museums, education and media</i>	401
<i>Session 7-1: Archaeometry of prehistoric and protohistoric stone, metal, ceramics and glass</i>	415
<i>Session 8-3: "Simple but not simplistic": Discussion on Bipolar Technology from different perspectives</i>	435
<i>Session 8-4: Stone Age engineering techniques and their implication for understanding Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens perspectives</i>	449
<i>Session 8-5: Shape and Beats: Combining technology and computational shape analysis of studying the variability of Large Cutting Tools</i>	459
<i>Session 25-2: Hunting: a diachronic perspective on its role on human subsistence from the Pleistocene to the Holocene</i>	467
<i>Session 25-1: Percussive osseous industry a human revolution between pre-formation and waste selection</i>	483
<i>General Session 4: Neolithic - The Copper Age</i>	491
<i>Session 17: Multi-faceted Pyroarchaeology: from environmental to cultural proxies</i>	501

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